

[Mrs. Laurence Long]

October 20, 1939

Mrs. Laurence Long (Farm Widow)

Monroe, N.C.

Mary P. Wilson, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names: Changed names:

Mrs. Laurence Long Mrs. Lank Lane C9 - N.C. Box 1-

The little dark haired woman seemed a part of the settee upon which she lay.

"You want me to tell you my life story? I don't mind but there's a lot of sadness connected with it. No one is interested in a story of that kind; they have trouble enough of their own. Sit down—you will have to be patient with me for I have a sick headache today. Oh, don't let it worry you any for it is much better now; anyway I have it so much. I don't pay much attention to it.

"Yes this is my home. My husband died last year and left it to me. He died in his sleep. I'm holding up my chin and trying to keep things going. I own the adjoining farm too. It's a lot of responsibility with no one to help but my sixteen year old son.

"I have three children dead—one, a baby twenty seven months old was killed by my son who is living now. He was cleaning his father's shot gun and it went off shooting my baby. I never throw it up to him or mention it in any way, because I know it was an accident—one of the others died with T. B. of the bone and one with scarlet fever. There were four deaths in the home in less than a year.

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"I don't wear black. I don't think it helps to brood over anything. You have no doubt heard of people saying, 'What is home without a mother?' I think the same thing could be said about a home without a father. My husband believed in having 2 plenty of hogs, chickens and cows; I have to neglect the house work to look after them and other outside duties.

"My boy finished high school this spring—he wants to go to College this winter, but if he does I'll be left alone unless he consents to go to a school that's near enough so he can come home at night. I can't figure out how I can manage the expense of a college education for him. He's so set on going that I'll have to do something about it—I'd sell part of my land if I could get a cash buyer.

"I was born on a farm and wouldn't hardly know which way to turn if I had to live in a city, but a farmer doesn't have much cash money; the problem comes up when I try to sell anything. I've tried selling vegetables, chickens and eggs, and find I lose more than I gain." Mrs. Lane was small and delicate looking, not capable of bearing her many burdens. Her tiny hands smoothed the white rag that was tied around her head, as she continued. "A woman can't provide for a home like a man—she just hasn't got the ability.

"I have a house on my other farm—you can see it from the window. I rented it to a man who has a wife and five children; whenever I feel blue and discouraged I think of them. The man isn't able to work and his wife needs to go to the hospital. They have much more to worry over than I do—four 3 of the children are in school and they have such a hard time keeping them clothed and fed. I think the welfare helps them a little but not enough. It seems that they give no more to large families than to small ones. Of course, I realize it is all charity and poor people have to be thankful for any help they get, but I still think there could be more for men with several children who are not able to provide for them.

"I've often thought, I'd like to be a case worker so I could try to help people. I'm am quite certain there are other higher officials who have the say so as to what is to be done. In a large organization, one person wouldn't have a chance to better conditions.

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“I was not brought up to work. My people were farmers but they didn't believe in letting girls do any work—all I know how to do I learned from my husband. Parents do not realize how much harm they do by not teaching their children to depend upon themselves. I know they intend to be good but goodness of that kind is more harmful than helpful.

“I'd like to get out and find a job where I could know I was going to make enough to live. I have no idea where to start to look for work, and I feel like I ought to try to take care of what my husband left until I see a much better way of providing for myself.”